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Fall 12-11-2020

How Live Streaming and Twitch Have Changed the Gaming Industry

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Recommended Citation

Krystal Ruiz. "How Live Streaming and Twitch Have Changed the Gaming Industry" *ART 108: Introduction to Games Studies* (2020).

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How Live Streaming and Twitch Have Changed the Gaming Industry

Live streaming in itself has become a booming industry in which its content consists of “streamers” who live broadcast numerous events and real-time interactions while simultaneously chatting with viewers drawing huge and increasing numbers (Adamovich). Twitch has especially excelled at garnering attention as one of the most popular live streaming platforms that focuses on broadcasting and viewing video game content (Adamovich). Twitch has grown rapidly within the last few years asserting its dominance as one of the major forces in the games industry and becoming a multi-billion-dollar industry (Adamovich). For example, according to Descrifier, in 2016 there were approximately 292 billion total minutes watched and about 2.2 million unique streamers (Woodcock and Johnson). In 2014, Twitch was also bought by Amazon for \$970 million (Woodcock and Johnson). In this paper I’m going to be discussing how prominently the use of live streaming services and the process of live streaming games through Twitch have not only changed the gaming industry and culture but have ultimately revolutionized the gaming experience (Woodcock and Johnson).

Firstly, live streaming services have benefitted both newly released and older games promotions and have been helpful in informing consumer choice. Whenever new games are released, many companies will send games before their official releases to majorly popular internet personalities or “streamers” such as Dr Disrespect and Ninja on platforms like twitch allowing for promotion far beyond normal marketing methods as they are able to reach the targeted demographic more easily and an overall broader audience range. In addition, as audience members taking a more passive role by viewing their gameplay, this allows for a more or

less first-hand look at new games to help pique potential player interest as many people go to game streamers to check out whether a new video game is worth buying and/or playing. A few examples of the successful results of these live collaborations on Twitch would be Defense of the Ancients (DOTA), League of Legends, and Overwatch (Adamovich).

Secondly, live streaming services have increased overall exposure and prolonged the lifespan of many independent, niche games and even older games (Woodcock and Johnson). For example, the Twitch channel Twitch Plays Pokemon (TPP) performed a social experiment consisting of a crowdsourced attempt to play all of the Pokémon games which generated about 55 million views in 2014 and even won a Guinness World Record (Adamovich). A more recent example of this phenomenon of live-streaming's ability to even rekindle fascination for older, independent and more niche games happened this year as well. Among Us, which was actually created about 2 years ago, blew up this year due to a popular Twitch channel deciding to stream it with his friends broadcasting to thousands of viewers, the app going from approximately 10 million app downloads in February to about 100 million by September.

Lastly, because these live-streaming platforms through popular personalities mean exposure to huge audiences, this exposure allows for not only more feedback but for more accessible feedback directly from fans and streamers for video game developers, building a link between streamers and developers and basically changing the developer's approaches to designing games. Because of live streaming services and specifically Twitch's influence, games are being created with those platforms in mind by building them to be replayable so that a streamer can give more free, consistent levels of promotion (Dealessandri). The next shift is

seen in the shift in genres towards an “emergence of battle royale games and a resurgence of multiplayer shooters” due to being easy to stream (Dealessandri).

These days, video game live-streaming has become a multi-billion-dollar industry in itself, with millions of people their favorite gaming broadcaster on these popular live streaming services. Over the years, Twitch and other similar services rapidly increasing popularity has continued to largely influence the gaming culture and experience, purported further by the pandemic of this year in 2020. As this technology has managed to create a new sense of community, the impact of live streaming services and platforms like Twitch continue to serve as major driving forces in changing the gaming industry for everyone for the better.

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